2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1956) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

excellent effect. They flaunt themselves in public, to the increased dismay of the villagers.

The villagers regard the appearance of menstrual blood as a disaster, and as the inauguration of a time of great danger for the girl, her family and, by extension, the whole tribe. She is considered as unclean, and is rigorously secluded and abased. Her family has to undertake a series of purification rituals ending in a feast (the part of the ceremony for which the Mbuti solicit "help"). They also have to discover the cause of the blood, which is believed by the Plains Bira and still by a number of the Forest Bira to be due to intercourse. The girl is questioned as to who caused the blood, and she names the youth on whom she has set her heart. He may acknowledge the blame, whether or not he ever had intercourse with her, and can then resolve the unclean situation by marrying her. If his wishes are otherwise he can deny her accusation and she will have to try elsewhere. The girl's parents will guide her accusations as they think necessary, but the actual extent to which the village *elima* leads thus directly into marriage seems to vary. Sometimes it is sufficient to secure admission of guilt and payment in lieu of marriage. But the villagers seldom try to follow an Mbuti *elima* through its full course; their major concern is that the impurity of the *elima* girls should not touch them. The provision of the final feast gives them an opportunity, which they do not always take, for supervising the ritual purification of the girls by bathing, the cleansing of the *elima* house, and the ritual disposal of all clothing and bedding and utensils used by the *bamelima*. The latter they do generally supervise, as the Mbuti are notoriously loath to part with perfectly good clothing or bedding for such *bulé* reasons, and will try to avoid having them destroyed.

If anything, the *elima* sets the villagers and the Mbuti apart, rather than offering any means for drawing them closer together. This is perhaps because while the *nkumbi* involves the village ancestors and is in honor of them, and secures their blessing, the village *elima* involves malevolent spirits more than it involves the ancestors. And as far as the villagers are concerned, evil spirits emanate from the forest. The *elima* offers no opportunity to the villagers for placing Mbuti girls under the control of the ancestral spirits; at the most, it offers them a responsibility for freeing them from contamination by the evil spirits. They sometimes voice the opinion that the Mbuti are in league with those spirits emanating from the forest, and rigorously avoid any contact with an Mbuti *elima*.

THE MAKING OF CAMP LELO

In the middle
of the day the sun found its way through the leaves and struck this bank, and the women liked to wade out to it and do their washing there. When the river was as low as this you could wade all the way across, if you knew where to step, but at other times a huge fallen tree was used as a bridge.

On the far side the ground rose sharply, and though at first the forest was still open and friendly, as soon as you reached the top of the rise it became thick and closed in around you, and the only paths were those made by animals, narrow and twisting.

Kenge showed me all this with his chest puffed up with pride. He told me I could drink water from any of the streams or from the Lelo itself; it was not like living in the village where both the food and water were dirty. He showed where the women would bathe, and warned me to keep upstream of the shingle bar, so as not to offend them. The other youths had already stripped naked and were splashing in the water, unashamed, though in deference to an overclad Westerner they held their hands in front of them when they turned to face me.

We went back to the campsite and Kenge started clearing the ground. Very shortly afterward three of the great hunters arrived—Njobo, the killer of elephants; Masisi, the proud father; and Manyalibo, the gruff, good-humored conservative. They shouted a greeting as they came into the clearing, and looking around they threw down their hunting nets where they thought they would like to have their houses built. Njobo chose to be just to the south of the hillock; Manyalibo and Masisi, good cousins that they were, put their nets down beside each other, opposite. Then almost immediately they disappeared into the forest, each in a different direction, each with bow and arrows. In less than fifteen minutes Kenge, who had been examining the tracks of a huge buffalo that had passed by the night before, suddenly stood still and motioned me to be quiet. With his hands he mimed an antelope running and pointed into the forest behind Manyalibo's chosen site.

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